

**Minutes of the 2025 Annual Town Meeting**  
Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at the Charleston Elementary School

The Annual Town & School District Meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Moderator John Kellogg, with School Business concluding at 10:28 am.

**Article 1. To elect a Town Moderator for the ensuing year.** With Moderator John Kellogg elected during School Business, town business began with Article 2.

**Article 2. To elect all officers as required by law.**

**Town Clerk & Treasurer:** Teri Gray was nominated, seconded, and elected for 3 years.  
**Selectboard:** Pat Austin, Robert Devaney Jr, and Tom Wagner each received a nomination and second. Candidates offered comment: Tom Wagner has been a full-time Charleston resident since 2017 and a Vermonter for many generations. He served as an officer in the Airforce and held a career in finance, giving him skills to manage a town budget and support roads and resources while keeping town affordable for families. Bob Devaney is "old school" with an open mind. His son Ian Devaney recognized his 10 years of service on the CVFD, and 20 years running a town business. Pat Austin has always lived in town and runs a large trash business with his father—whose father and grandfather also ran businesses in town. He served eight years on the school board and four on the Selectboard, and if voters would like him to serve, he will continue as before. 101 paper ballots were cast: Austin 51; Wagner 35; and Devaney 15. Pat Austin was elected for 3 years. Voters applauded retiring board member Peter Moskovites.

**Lister:** Steven Wilson was nominated, seconded, and elected for 3 years.

**Lister:** Seeing no nominations, the Selectboard will appoint a lister until next Town Meeting.

**Auditor:** Diana Marckwardt was nominated, seconded, and elected for 3 years.

**First Constable:** Michael Tynio was nominated, seconded, and elected for 2 years.

**Second Constable:** Anya Tynio was nominated, seconded, and elected for 1 year.

**Cemetery Commissioner:** Sherman Allen was nominated, seconded, and elected for 5 years.

**Article 3. Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to appoint a Delinquent Tax Collector to be compensated hourly, with delinquent tax penalties retained as revenue to the Town?** A motion was made and seconded. Vote: Ayes have it: RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Treasurer Teri Gray said that Grace Frizzell decided not to run, and this is an opportunity to take the job in-house because there is much more to the delinquent tax process than previously. The moderator said the collector has been an individual paid by penalties collected, but this article would bring the role into the town office. The Selectboard would appoint an individual, and it will no longer be elected. If voted down, a collector will be elected under the next article. Grace Frizzell confirmed she is not seeking reelection.

**Article 4. To elect a Delinquent Tax Collector for a term of 1 year.** Because Article 3 passed, Article 4 was passed over by agreement of all voters.

**Article 5. Shall the voters authorize the Treasurer to collect current taxes with a final due date of Friday, October 24, 2025, with the policy of turning over to the delinquent tax collector taxes not physically received by the Treasurer in the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 pm on October 24, 2025, with postmarks not accepted as timely payment?** A motion was made and seconded. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. No discussion.

**Article 6. Shall the voters authorize total fund expenditures of \$999,320.90 for selectboard, highway, and cemetery operating expenses for the year beginning January 1, 2025, of**

which \$758,203.02 shall be raised by taxes and \$241,117.88 by non-tax revenue? A motion was made and seconded. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Former Selectboard Chair Peter Moskovites said the board kept the tax rate essentially flat compared to last year; it will result in a tax increase of \$4.44 on a \$100,000 property. The town purchased a new truck in 2024 without the encumbrance of a loan. Roadside ditching is ongoing to control erosion. Regarding non-tax revenue, Treasurer Teri Gray directed voters to budget revenue line items like state aid, hold harmless payments, marriage and dog license fees. Asked about a zero-dollar budget for storm repairs, Asst. Treasurer Colleen Kellogg said the town does not raise taxes in anticipation of a disaster, but if one occurs, an expense line item is created to capture costs for potential reimbursement.

**Article 7. Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to transfer the 2024 Road Surplus of \$26,798.68 to the Road Equipment Reserve Fund?** A motion was made and seconded. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Peter Moskovites said the Road Equipment Reserve has about \$200,000, and the board usually asks voters to do this with a small surplus. Grader replacement is on the horizon and will cost \$300,000 to \$400,000.

**Article 8. Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$55,609.00 to the Charleston Volunteer Fire Department and direct the Selectboard to assess a tax over and above the budget to meet the same?** A motion was made and seconded. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: CVFD Treasurer Blair Moulton said the department is entering its 71<sup>st</sup> year and is one of two Vermont departments that is 100% volunteer. The budget is level funded, but they will have to ask for more in the future to replace expiring turn-out gear. Budget funds covered replacement of AED paddles for over \$2100. CVFD appreciates support from townspeople including two successful fundraisers in 2024. Scott Scelza suggested taxpayers give more so members don't have to fundraise on top of their volunteer time.

**Article 9. Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$11,174 to the following organizations, which received appropriations of the same amount in 2024, and direct the Selectboard to assess a tax over and above the budget to meet the same?**

- a. \$500 to Charleston Historical Society for support of the museum and collection
- b. \$1,000 to Echo Lake Protective Association for milfoil prevention programs
- c. \$800 to NorthWoods Stewardship Center for conservation and education services
- d. \$700 to Island Pond Library for services to residents
- e. \$1,650 to Rural Community Transportation for transportation services to residents
- f. \$500 to Orleans County Citizens Advocacy for mentoring individuals with developmental disabilities
- g. \$600 to Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging for services to elder and disabled Vermonters
- h. \$1,074 to Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc. for mental health, substance use, and intellectual disabilities services to residents
- i. \$500 to Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter for care of unwanted pets
- j. \$3,000 to Orleans Essex VNA & Hospice for community nursing and health programs
- k. \$50 to GreenUp Vermont for the statewide cleanup event and bags
- l. \$100 to Vermont Symphony Orchestra Symphony Kids for performances for local students
- m. \$700 to Umbrella for domestic violence prevention and services to victims?

A motion was made and seconded. Pat Austin moved to amend the article to increase the Charleston Historical Society appropriation to \$1,000, and the motion to amend was seconded. Discussion: Austin pointed out that CHS is part of the town and one of the lowest

funded. Julianne Woolard made voters aware that NorthWoods is in Charleston, and that many organizations on the list offer services not available in Charleston—like libraries, which are especially important to families with young children. Peter Moskovites said organizations can increase their amount by gathering petition signatures from 5% of voters. The amendment passed by voice vote. With no further discussion, the motion passed as amended. RESULT: Passed as amended.


**Article 10. Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$1,350 to the Dailey Memorial Library, and direct the Selectboard to assess a tax over and above the budget to meet the same?** A motion was made and seconded. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Dailey board member Mickey Morelli said the library circulated petitions to increase Charleston's appropriation by \$100 to help with increased salaries and insurance. Most Vermont libraries are funded 80-90% by their towns. Dailey is under 50%, so they conduct fundraisers and really appreciate town appropriations from Derby, Holland, Morgan and Charleston.

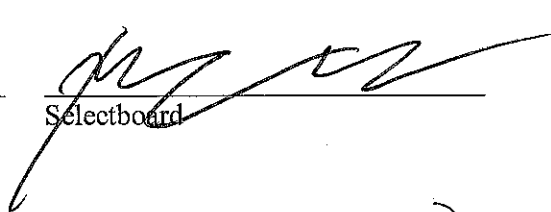
**Article 11. To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.** Peggy Stevens, town representative to NEK Broadband, said the network is coming this year to 41 nodes in Charleston, which will bring service to over 300 Charleston addresses within the next year. Residents can look up their address at the back table. Other addresses are not yet funded, and residents can help NEK Broadband seek BEAD grants by signing a petition. NEK Broadband service and support is as good or better than currently available broadband, and it's cheaper. Everyone deserves equal access to high-speed internet for reasons like telehealth, working from home, and children's education. NEK Broadband is hiring—job info is at the back table. The North Country Career Center received a grant to train installers, so job training is available. Blair Moulton said the Charleston Volunteer Fire Department will hold its oyster supper this year. A commercial kitchen is set up at the fire station, and the event will be held there from now on.


Seeing no other business, the Annual Town Meeting was adjourned at 11:29 am.

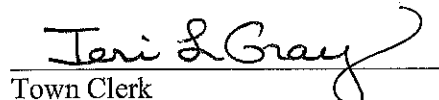
DATED AT CHARLESTON, VERMONT THIS 4th DATE OF MARCH 2025.

Respectfully submitted:

  
BCA

  
Selectboard

  
Moderator

  
Town Clerk